



Department of Energy  
National Nuclear Security Administration  
Washington, DC 20585



March 10, 2009

The Honorable A. J. Eggenberger  
Chairman  
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board  
625 Indiana Avenue, N.W., Suite 700  
Washington, D.C. 20004-2901

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter provides an interim response to your letter regarding Fire and Emergency Response Capabilities at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) dated December 8, 2008. You requested both a 90-day and 180-day report on the Cooperative Agreement between Los Alamos County and the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). Both reports were conditioned on the completion of the Baseline Needs Assessment (BNA) in December 2008. However, in accordance with the Cooperative Agreement, the BNA is not scheduled to be completed until March 31, 2009. Therefore, we are able to respond partially to the requested scope for the 90-day report, and we request an extension to the 180-day report.

To address the first element of your 90-day report request, the attached Los Alamos Site Office (LASO) memorandum dated February 24, 2009, transmits those *prudent immediate measures* that have been undertaken to improve fire and emergency response capabilities. These actions include providing emergency responder radiological training, participating in hazardous material exercises, performing facility familiarization tours, updating fire pre-plans, and conducting table-top exercises. Also, LANL increased the minimum on shift-staffing, per the Cooperative Agreement.

For the second element of the 90-day report, the Board requested a *summary of the result of the [latest BNA]*. While the draft BNA is available, it is not scheduled to be finalized and submitted for LASO approval until March 31, 2009. It would be premature to summarize a draft document for inclusion in this report before it is fully vetted and finalized. The NNSA will transmit the BNA summary to the DNFSB by June, 2009, as well as a discussion on how the Cooperative Agreement will address the capabilities identified in the BNA.

For the third element of the 90-day report, the Board requested information on the *strategy and schedule for achieving the necessary fire and emergency response capabilities*. Upon completion of the revised BNA, LANL intends to develop a Plan of Action (POA) to implement BNA recommendations. The Plan will include lessons learned from drills and exercises, verification of drill effectiveness, and the formal



tracking of identified issues. Additionally, LANL has recently increased staffing and reorganized the Fire Protection Division to improve management of corrective actions, improve fire fighter training, and strengthen fire department contract management.

Finally, the Board requested that the 180-day report provide detailed plans, schedules, funding sources, and progress for fully implementing the revised BNA. As discussed above, the BNA is not final. Therefore, we request that the due date for the second report be extended to September 25, 2009, approximately 180-days from when the BNA will be available.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. James McConnell, Director, Office of Safety, at (202) 586-4379.

Sincerely,



William C. Ostendorff  
Principal Deputy Administrator

Enclosures

cc: M. Whitaker Jr., HS-1.1